

**ON THE
RIGHT SIDE**



Fr. Paul J. Cuddy

It is over a year since I met Father Stephen A. Chomko at St. Casimir's Forty Hours in Elmira. He is a Ukrainian priest of the Eastern Rite and pastor of St. Nicholas Church in Elmira Heights. I asked him: "What of your people? Do they suffer the puzzlement that so many of the omissions and changes have brought to the Western Church?" "No. We are not held to the liturgical changes of the Latin Church. Our people love their traditions and music and ritual. Eastern Rite Liturgy is rich in symbolism, ceremonial and mystery. It is part of the very life of our people."

"What about the instruction of the young?" I pursued. "We use some of the catechetical material offered by publishers. I like 'Scope' especially. But we always use as a basis The Baltimore Catechism. This presents Catholic doctrine clearly. It is memorized by our children and becomes a store house of religious doctrine for their adult life."

A month ago an invitation came from St. Nicholas Church Committee inviting me to the 30th anniversary of Father Chomko's ordination. It meant five hours of driving by my regard for the priest and the Eastern Rite, impelled me to the Elmira Heights church. The anniversary Mass was at 4 Sunday afternoon, April 25. I arrived about 4:15 at the beautiful tan brick church. It is only 20 years old — and is debt free! The interior has the traditional iconostasis, that large decorated wooden screen, with the three doors opened during the liturgy. This preserves the sense of holiness for the sanctuary where the liturgy is celebrated. It is covered with symbols of the Most Blessed Trinity and bright Byzantine paintings of Christ, His Mother, the Apostles and other saints. The tabernacle is a small replica of a gilded Byzantine church. The church was filled with parishioners and well-wishers. Visiting Ukrainian priests and also Latin priests from Elmira, Corning, Addison and Waverly area, were up front.

Each worshiper had a missalette with the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in English and Ukrainian, even as we used to have our English-Latin missals. The worship was flowing and devout. The Mass lasted 45 minutes. The people made the responses and entered into the prayers with the ease of a familiar community. The prayers of the liturgy are a wondrous combination of prayers similar to the Jewish prayers which Jesus prayed and the developments from the soul of the Church from its beginnings. Horace Greeley advised a young man seeking money: "Go West, young man; go West." Would that our Western innovators might go East for a genuinely sacred and moving liturgy. No part of the Mass was more thrilling than when the congregation burst into a hymn sung in their native tongue, sung in parts, with the base notes like the deep notes from the bourdon of an organ.

After Mass a dinner was served to a crowd in the parish hall, with girls and women serving in native attractive blouses. The dinner was sumptuous. The speeches were many but brief. Greetings of the clergy were eloquently delivered by Father Adamski. And as a finale Fr. Chomko reminisced about his first assignment at the age of 25, fresh from Catholic University, to a tiny parish of 18 Ukrainian families in the mid-west, with an area which had a radius of 500 miles to cover. The priest paid tribute to his late

father and mother. "Our home was a home of prayer. Although my father was in business, and a very busy man, the family under his guidance knelt for prayer together every day." I think we all were contemplating that scene of a devout family kneeling in daily adoration of the Blessed Trinity, and to honor the God-Bearer, our Lady; and remembering that it was from such a home this priest of God came forth. May we who know so little about the Eastern Rite churches give special honor to our fellow Catholics of the East; and a special love for those to whom we are so close in devotion and doctrine, the Orthodox, Greeks, Ukrainians, Russians, Lebanese, Syrians, Copts et al. All these adore the Trinity with fidelity and they love the God-Bearer with a devotion which might well be emulated by our Latin selves."

MOTHERS CLUB

Hornell — The St. Ann's Mothers Club elected new officers at its monthly meeting. They are: Gail Cianciosi, president; Mary Kühn, secretary; and Joann Wolfurst, treasurer. At the same meeting, Donna Kull of the Right to Life Committee requested mothers to write their congressmen regarding a bill requiring a minor to have parental consent to have an abortion. She also asked them to write in opposition to the bill which uses brain death as criterion for taking human organs for organ banks.



50th Anniversary

Photos by Susan McKinney

Father Joseph Reinhart, diocesan director for the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith, greets Bishop Edward T. O'Meara, national director, in the photo at right, taken outside the Rochester office on East Avenue. Bishop O'Meara was in Rochester April 27 to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the local office. Prepared for Mass are, left to right above, Father Michael Conboy; Robert Doell, a seminarian at St. Bernard's; Father Raymond Quetchenbach, SVD, a missionary home on leave from the Philippines; Bishop O'Meara; Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and Father Reinhart.



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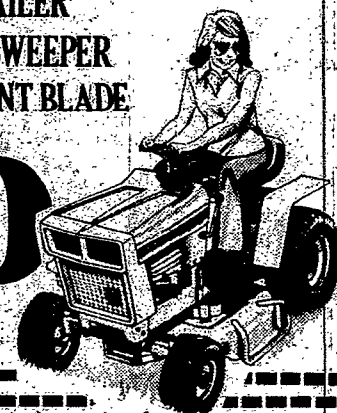
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